

The Lamb and Flag
by
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Based on an idea by Adam O'Meara

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FADE IN:

INT. PUB - DAY 1977

Fingers clutch a prison-like grille as a radio murmurs O.S.

The grille is raised, revealing pub landlord RORY, 40s, behind a fusty 1970s English bar.

He's dressed in a crisply ironed shirt, the cuffs folded back; his short back and sides are neatly combed.

Rory raises the hatch to the lounge.

BERYL (O.S.)
Is it straight?

BERYL, 30s, voluptuous but primly dressed, is standing on a seat, pinning red, white and blue bunting to the walls.

Rory marches over to her, his eyes on the hem of her skirt.

RORY
Your slip's showing.

Beryl tugs down her skirt.

She hops down from the chair and examines her handiwork with a smile.

The bunting hangs over a picture of the Queen in military uniform.

A ROMANTIC BALLAD plays on the radio.

Beryl waltzes around the pub with a banner, while Rory takes refuge behind the bar.

A door opens and GORDON, 10, skips in.

Beryl takes hold of Gordon and twirls him around.

Gordon giggles and turns to see if his dad is watching, but Rory is focused on the brass pump he's polishing.

GORDON
Dad! Watch this!

Gordon does a double twirl under his mum's arm, then looks at his dad.

But Rory is heading into the kitchen.

Gordon deflates.

Beryl notices.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BERYL

Come on; give me a hand with this,
love.

Gordon takes the end of the banner and stretches it out:
'Queen Elizabeth's Silver Jubilee: 1952-1977'.

INT. PUB - LATER

The banner hangs on the wall beneath the Queen's photo.

O.S. HANDS BEAT OUT A MILITARY RHYTHM.

Gordon is DRUMMING on the counter.

Rory arranges beer mats just so around the bar, which is now
festooned in bunting.

Gordon's DRUMMING REACHES A CRESCENDO as he tries to attract
his dad's attention, but Rory just looks irritated.

Beryl comes in from the kitchen bearing a plate of white
sandwiches covered in clingfilm.

GORDON

Can I stay up for the party?

RORY

There's not going to be a party.

GORDON

But it's the jubilee!

Rory eyes Beryl's shiny hair and fresh makeup suspiciously as
she sets the sandwiches on the bar.

GORDON (CONT'D)

We had a party at Christmas.

Beryl bites her lip.

Rory tenses.

GORDON (CONT'D)

Can't I just stay up for a bit?
Everyone at school--

RORY

I want you upstairs out the way.

GORDON

But I could help you like I did at
Christmas.

RORY

No!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Gordon sighs.

Rory glances at the clock: one minute to six.

RORY (CONT'D)
Go upstairs now, and stay there.

Gordon looks to his mum for help.

BERYL
Do as your dad says, love.

Gordon slopes off upstairs, dejected, leaving the door ajar.

Beryl goes back to the kitchen, leaving the door open.

Rory looks around: all the doors to their private quarters are open!

SLAM.

SLAM.

He shuts them.

Rory takes a deep breath and unlocks the door to the street.

He steps behind the bar and pulls on a military blazer. A Korean war medal is pinned to the breast pocket.

Rory SHUTS the hatch.

He stands behind the bar as if preparing for battle.

INT. PUB - NIGHT

A photo of British paratroopers. A motto underneath reads: Utrunque Paratus, Ready for Anything.

Rory's POV: WHOOSH! WHOOSH! WHOOSH! Customers of all shapes and sizes zoom into Rory's territory. Only the closed hatch protects him from them.

He draws pints,

pushes optics,

takes money,

RINGS the till,

gives change.

Rory pauses for breath. MERRY LAUGHTER and cigarette smoke hover around him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LEO (O.S.)
Reporting for duty, Sir!

Rory stiffens involuntarily, and is greeted by TITTING from a group at the bar.

LEO, early 40s, is saluting Rory mockingly. He's a loose, louche hedonist, his belly bursting out of his loud shirt.

His henchmen - a weasel, a middle-aged moll, and a disgruntled old couple - hang on his every word.

RORY
The usual, Leo?

LEO
Aye, and give me a whiskey chaser,
being as it's the jubilee,
Sergeant.

Rory heads to the optics.

BERYL (O.S.)
Sergeant major.

Leo runs his eyes along Beryl's body.

LEO
What's that, my beauty?

Beryl blossoms under his appreciative gaze.

BERYL
He was a sergeant major - in Korea.

LEO AND HENCHMEN
Oooooo!

LEO
Partial to a man in uniform, eh,
Beryl?

Beryl gives him a flirty little smile.

LEO (CONT'D)
I s'll have to get my helmet out!

Rory spins round, spilling Leo's whiskey.

RAUCOUS LAUGHTER from Leo's henchmen.

The laughter drifts up past the disapproving framed face of the Queen to...

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

..grey toy soldiers wielding their guns behind a "hill" of bedclothes on the floor.

GORDON (O.S.)
Enemy forces closing in!

Gordon, in his pyjamas, is sprawled on the floor, holding an Action Man in military uniform.

On the other side of the "hill" is an enemy force of red soldiers by the bedroom door.

GORDON (CONT'D)
(to grey toy soldiers)
Take your positions, men.

O.S. ROARED GREETINGS as more customers flood into the pub.

GORDON (CONT'D)
We're under attack!

INT. PUB - NIGHT

Punters lurch drunkenly towards the bar, glasses held aloft. It's rowdy, smoky and hot.

Rory looks out on the sea of drunken faces, paralysed.

He pulls out an ironed white handkerchief and dabs at his sweating forehead.

Beryl shoots Rory a look of annoyance as she presses a glass against the optic. Her shirt button is undone, revealing cleavage.

BERYL
Rory!

Rory looks round. He notices Beryl's shirt is agape. He signals to her to button up, but she doesn't notice.

BERYL (CONT'D)
There's people want serving.

Rory turns to serve a customer, one eye still on Beryl.

Beryl sets drinks in front of Leo and his cronies. Leo's eyes are on her chest.

LEO
So what kind of entertainment have
you got laid on for me tonight,
Beryl?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He leans in towards her, lips red and wet.

BERYL
(teasing)
What are you in the mood for?

LEO
A repeat of Christmas wouldn't go
amiss.

Rory is suddenly at Beryl's shoulder.

She sees her button is undone and covers up.

Leo smirks at Rory.

Rory glares at Leo.

LEO (CONT'D)
Looks like you need a hand,
Sergeant.

The crowd are pressing up to the bar, demanding service.

Leo raises the hatch.

LEO (CONT'D)
S'll I slip in and help the missus
for a bit?

The henchmen HOOT with nervous laughter, attracting the
attention of the rest of the pub.

Rory shuts the hatch firmly.

RORY
We can manage, thank you.

Leo walks away and then takes a run at the bar, as if he's
going to jump over it.

Rory backs away.

The whole pub erupts in LAUGHTER and JEERING.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

The grey soldiers' territory is being trespassed on by the
red soldiers.

Action Man is on the edge of his territory.

GORDON
(as Action Man)
Hold your line, men!

INT. PUB - NIGHT

Beryl is by Rory's side as the crowd shout drunkenly. Rory's knuckles are clenched. She touches his arm. Leo notices the gesture.

BERYL

(to Rory)

Maybe I should pass the sandwiches round now.

LEO

Sandwiches?! That'll not satisfy, love.

Leo puffs out his chest like he owns the pub.

LEO (CONT'D)

(addressing the crowd)

I bet Her Majesty isn't getting sandwiches.

The crowd turn towards him.

CROWD

No chance!

LEO

Hey Rory, you're the man in the know when it comes to serving the Queen. What've they got laid on for Her Highness tonight?

Rory is white knuckled, breathing heavily, surrounded by the enemy.

LEO (CONT'D)

I bet she's getting some entertainment. A bit of royal variety.

RORY

I believe so.

LEO

Aye, and paid for out of my taxes, and all. Well, what's good for Queenie is good for me.

He turns to the crowd.

LEO (CONT'D)

Oi, you lot. How's about some entertainment?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CROWD

Yeah!

Glasses are raised, faces beam.

Beryl casts an anxious look at Rory.

Rory freezes.

LEO

Bring down the boy!

CROWD

Yeah!

CHEERS from the crowd.

LEO

Gor-don, Gor-don...

Rory quakes.

Leo begins a SLOW HANDCLAP. The crowd join in.

CROWD

Gor-don! Gor-don!

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Gordon sits against his bedroom door, holding Action Man.

Gordon's face is tense and white.

CROWD (O.S.)

GOR-DON! GOR-DON!

The grey soldiers are completely surrounded by the reds.

INT. PUB - NIGHT

Rory is standing paralysed behind the bar.

CROWD

We want Gordon!

LEO

Then let's get him!

Leo races to the stairs door, the crowd surging after him.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Gordon speaks into an imaginary radio as the sound of the crowd rises.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GORDON
(as Action Man)
Mayday, mayday...

He looks at the "broken" radio in disgust and flings it aside.

INT. PUB - NIGHT

RORY forces his way through the crowd towards the stairs door. Leo is just ahead of him.

Rory gets there just as Leo is opening the door.

Rory bars the doorway with his body, surrounded by the drunken mob.

CROWD
Gor-don! Gor-don!

Leo's ruddy mouth is agape, spittle flying into Rory's pallid face.

LEO AND CROWD
Gor-don! Gor-don! Gor-don!

The enemy press forward, pulling at the door.

Rory is in a state of panic. He slides down the door to the floor; his medal has disappeared.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Action Man cowers behind Gordon's leg.

GORDON (O.S.)
(imitating heavy gunfire)
RAT-A-TAT-TAT. RAT-A-TAT-TAT.

The green soldiers lie "dead" on the floor as O.S. THE CHEERING PEAKS IN A NEAR SCREAM.

Gordon's eyes glitter.

GORDON (CONT'D)
(as Action Man)
Sorry, men. There was nothing I could do.

INT. PUB - NIGHT

The crowd pull at the door, trying to clamber past Rory, who's still on the floor.

Then suddenly Gordon peers round the door, squinting in the unaccustomed light.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CROWD
(delighted)
Gordon!

Leo rubs his hands together in anticipation.

The crowd parts, and Gordon wanders into the centre of the circle they've formed.

Rory gazes up at his son.

Gordon stands awkwardly in the middle of the crowd, hitching up his loose pyjama bottoms.

He looks nervously round the circle of swaying, drunken, leering faces.

Rory hangs his head in shame.

Behind the bar, Beryl presses a cassette player button.

The opening bars of IGGY POP'S THE PASSENGER play.

The crowd's murmurs diminish.

For a moment, Gordon seems rooted to the spot. Then he half closes his eyes.

DRUMMING of Gordon's hands on his legs.

Gordon's little body begins to sway.

The music builds...and then his legs begin to move.

Gordon struts,

twirls,

jumps,

spins,

kicks,

dancing with heart-stopping beauty as he loses himself in the music.

The crowd look on in awe.

The disgruntled couple brighten.

Weasel smiles to himself.

The moll's old eyes well with tears.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

And Leo's greedy features settle into those of a vulnerable boy.

At the bar, Beryl watches her son proudly.

The MUSIC DIMINISHES and Gordon ends his dance with a flourish and a grin.

The crowd is silent, awed.

A BARRAGE OF APPLAUSE AND WHISTLING. Gordon smiles shyly.

Leo winks at Gordon and returns to the bar.

Beryl takes the clingfilm off the sandwiches and passes them around.

Gordon adjusts his pyjama bottoms. He looks over to his dad expectantly.

Rory's eyes are on the ground. He picks something up from the floor and turns it over in his fingers.

He gets to his feet as if from a dream and walks over to his son.

Two faces close together - Rory close to tears, Gordon full of joy as, unseen, Rory pins something to his son's chest.

Rory steps back and claps Gordon on the shoulder.

His Korean war medal is pinned to Gordon's pyjamas.

Gordon examines the medal proudly.

He looks up and grins at his dad.

But Rory is heading towards the exit, his shoulders slumped in defeat, his back turned to his son... as behind the bar, Beryl flirts with Leo

FADE OUT.